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# Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 /067 W
----------072020 130955Z /10
R 130751Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5049

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, US, ASEAN
SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO US-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS

1. SUMMARY. LOCAL PRESS REPORTING ON ASEAN-US CONSULTATIONS EXTENSIVE AND ON THE WHOLE POSITIVE, CHARACTERIZING TALKS AS HISTORIC, SIGNIFICANT AND ENCOURAGING, IF NOT TANGIBLE. PRESS COVERAGE STRESSED EXPLORATORY NATURE OF MEETING, AND WARNED NOT TO EXPECT TOO MUCH. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESS REPORTING AS A WHOLE HIGHLIGHTED POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CONSULTATIONS, DOWN-PLAYING LACK OF CONCRETE CONCESSIONS BY U.S. GROUP. DAILY EXPRESS ARTICLE, SEPTEMBER 10, REPORTED THAT "AREAS OF CONTROVERSY ARE FEWER THAN AREAS OF AGREEMENT," BETWEEN ASEAN AND THE U.S. EXPRESS ARTICLE ON SEPTEMBER 11, REPORTING COOPER-ROMULO PRESS CONFERENCE, FOCUSSED ON STATEMENT THAT US AND ASEAN REJECTED WORLDWIDE PROTECTIONIST TREND, STATING ALSO THAT US AGREED TO "CONCERTED ACTION" TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO ASEAN PRODUCTS INTO US.

3. TIMES JOURNAL REPORTING EMPHASIZED AID ASPECT OF TALKS. SEPTEMBER 10 ARTICLE TITLED "NO DOLLARS PLEDGE TO ASEAN PROGRAM," WHICH REPORTED UNDERSECRETARY COOPER'S STATEMENT THAT AID FOR INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS NOT POSSIBLE, WAS FOLLOWED
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BY STARTLING HEADLINE NEXT DAY, "US TO GIVE AID TO ASEAN FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS," WHICH REFERRED TO STATEMENT IN JOINT PRESS RELEASE PLEDGING US PARTICIPATION IN "REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION" WHICH SATISFIES BASIC HUMAN NEEDS CRITERION. IN SEPTEMBER 11 ARTICLE, TIME JOURNAL CALLED THE DIALOGUE "ENCOURAGING," THOUGH IT POINTED OUT THAT IN TERMS OF AID, THE US PROMISED NOTHING WHILE THE JAPANESE GAVE $1

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BILLION.

4. BUSINESS DAY IN SEPTEMBER 12 ARTICLE STRESSED EXPLORATORY NATURE OF TALKS THOUGH POINTED OUT THAT US REJECTION OF STABEX ARRANGEMENT PUT "DAMPER ON ASEAN HOPES." ARTICLE BALANCED NEGATIVE US RESPONSE TO STABEX, COMMON FUND AND ASEAN INDUSTRIALIZATION SCHEME WITH US POSITION ON BROADENING OF GSP AND IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS OF ASEAN PRODUCTS INTO US VIA MTN.

5. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS MINIMAL. DAILY EXPRESS ON SEPTEMBER 8 DELINEATED ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED AND ASEAN STAND, EXPRESSING OPTIMISM THAT PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED. EVEN THE USUALLY VITRIOLIC TEODORO VALENCIA, DAILY EXPRESS COLUMNIST, WAS MORE-OR-LESS POSITIVE, STATING IN SEPTEMBER 11 COLUMN THAT THOUGH NOTHING SOLID COULD BE EXPECTED NOW, "TANGIBLE RESULTS WILL COME LATER." IN COLUMN NEXT DAY HE SAID IN MORE DEPRECATING MANNER THAT TALKS "NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS." SEPTEMBER 10 DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIAL ACCLAIMED US-ASEAN STAND AGAINST PROTECTIONISM. IN EDITORIAL CARTOON IN BULLETIN TODAY, TWO FIGURES, ASEAN AND US, SHOWN PLANTING TREE LABELLED ASEAN-US COOPERATION, WITH CAPTION READING, "WILL IT BLOOM?" THE ONLY NEGATIVE COMMENT CAME IN JESS BIGORNIA'S SEPTEMBER 13 BULLETIN TODAY COLUMN, WHICH, CITING RISE IN US CUSTOM DUTIES ON ASEAN EXPORT ITEMS, STATED THAT US-ASEAN TALKS "PROVING
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TO BE A DISAPPOINTMENT."

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PRESS REACTION IS POSITIVE THUS FAR, HIGH EXPECTATIONS PERSIST FOR MORE CONCRETE BENEFITS FROM THE US IN THE FUTURE. REPORTING WAS MATTER-OF-FACT AND EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO THE AMERICAN POSITION, A CONTRAST FROM THE ROUGH TREATMENT THE JAPANESE RECEIVED BEFORE AND AFTER PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA'S TRIP HERE LAST AUGUST. IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT IMMEDIATE EXPECTATIONS KEPT TO A MINIMUM BY ACCURATE CHARACTERIZATION BY LOCAL GUIDED PRESS ON EXPLORATORY NATURE OF CONSULTATIONS. STULL

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# Message Attributes

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